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HEADQUARTERS CAMP DETRICK
FREDERICK, MARYLAND

Medical Bacteriology Division

25 January 1956

Dr. Joshua Lederberg
University of Wisconsin
Department of Genetics
Madison 6, Wisconsin

Dear Josh:

Thanks for the suggestions and detailed consideration you have given to our problems in the Bacterial Genetics Branch.

We have considered both Zelle and Zinder. My choice of these two would be Zinder. His professional accomplishment and his strong background in medical bacteriology both at Wisconsin and Rockefeller far outweigh Zelle's strength as a group leader. In fact, I have been disappointed in Zelle's productivity and originality for the past several years. Thus far, I have not contacted Zinder directly although Atwood was in hopes of attracting him at one time and Werner Braun has volunteered to determine, in a preliminary way, Zinder's interest in our program. I shall write Zinder if he expresses any interest whatever.

I should like to hear more about your postdoctoral fellow, S. G. Bradley. What is his background and when will he be available? Skaar was considered last fall, but he already was committed for the academic year.

Your question concerning our need for a genetics branch is one that has received some thought, particularly during the last few months when we have had no head and an inadequate number of "instructors" and "assistant professors" in this area. I am convinced that our work requires a strong genetics group. My principal concern has been whether the geneticists should be assigned as independent investigators to a group working on a specific organism or to a group of their own. Again I favor the latter because such an arrangement provides opportunity for a less restrictive program and still permits an investigator to work on pathogens of interest to the applied groups if he so desires.

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In addition to having a more basic program I believe that some stimulation is derived by working with others having a similar interest, aside from the fact that such an arrangement allows for the training of junior personnel by those who are more experienced. A breadth of interest will come from frequent contacts with the bacteriologists, biochemists, immunologists, etc., and need not be at the expense of one's own discipline.

Thanks again for your assistance. I will appreciate hearing more about Bradley and anyone else you may care to suggest.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Riley".

RILEY D. HOUSEWRIGHT
Chief, MB Division

RDH:dsw